

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 TANANA 00822 200907 Z

14

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00

PA-03 RSC-01 USIA-12 PRS-01 L-03 SS-15 NSC-10 RSR-01

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P R 200850 Z JUN 73

FM AMEMBASSY TANANARIVE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5395

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L TANANARIVE 0822

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, MA ( RAKOTONIRINA, MANANDAFY)

SUBJ: TRIAL OF RADICAL LEADER

1. VERDICT IS EXPECTED AFTERNOON JUNE 20 IN TRIAL OF RADICAL MFM LEADER MANANDAFY RAKOTONIRINA WHICH BEGAN MORNING JUNE 19 AND CARRIED LATE INTO NIGHT OF SAME DAY. RAKOTONIRINA, WHO GENERALLY KNOWN SIMPLY AS MANANDAFY, IS CHARGED WITH ACTS TENDING TO DISTURB PUBLIC ORDER DURING CELEBRATION OF MAY 13 ANNIVERSARY OF LAST YEAR'S STUDENT- WORKING UPRISING. GOVT HAD CALLED FOR DIGNIFIED RELIGIOUS OBSERVATION OF ANNIVERSARY AND HAD FORBIDDEN OTHER PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS SUCH AS THOSE WHICH MANANDAFY ACCUSED OF FOMENTING. MANANDAFY, WHO ACCORDING TO PRESS HAS NOT DENIED ACTS, CLAIMS NON- CHRISTIANS HAD EQUAL RIGHT TO DEMONSTRATE AND THAT ACCUSATION CONCERNING MAY 13 DEMONSTRATIONS IS MERE PRETEXT. ON TRIAL ALSO ARE 72 DEFENDANTS WHO ACCUSED OF PARTICIPATING IN OR FOMENTING FORBIDDEN DEMONSTRATION.

2. CROWD ESTIMATED OFFICIALLY AT AROUND 2000 MAINTAINED WATCH AROUND COURTHOUSE JUNE 19 AND WAS CLOSELY SURVEILLED BY IMPRESSIVE SECURITY CONTINGENT. NO RPT NO MAJOR INCIDENTS REPORTED, PARTICULARLY SINCE MANANDAFY BROUGHT IN THROUGH COURTYARD ENTRANCE AND COURTROOM CLOSED TO PUBLIC SPECTATORS. INTEREST IN TRIAL RUNNING VERY HIGH THROUGHOUT TANANARIVE EVEN AMONG ELITE WHO WOULD NOT DARE GET CAUGHT IN POSSIBLE COURTHOUSE DEMONSTRATION.

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CONSENSUS AMONG MALAGASY IS THAT MANANDAFY WILL BE GIVEN LIGHT SENTENCE WHICH MAY EVEN BE SUSPENDED. CO- DEFENDANTS WOULD PRESUMABLY GET SIMILAR TREATMENT. GOVT WOULD THEREBY HAVE PROVED POINT THAT MANADAFY' S ACTIONS WERE ILLEGAL BUT AT THE SAME TIME HAVE AVOIDED MAKING HIM MARTYR.

3. EMBASSY HAS WARNED AMERICANS TO STAY AWAY FROM COURTHOUSE AREA DURING TRIAL AND TO BE ALERT TO DANGER OF POSSIBLE DEMONSTRATIONS WHATEVER THE OUTCOME.  
MENDENHALL

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NNNNMAFVVZCZ

\*\*\* Current Handling Restrictions \*\*\* n/a

\*\*\* Current Classification \*\*\* CONFIDENTIAL

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**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
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**Copy:** SINGLE  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
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**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
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**Disposition Reason:**  
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**TAGS:** PINS, MA, (RAKOTONIRINA, MANANDAFY)  
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**SECSTATE WASHDC INFO PARIS**  
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